

Thursday February 14th, 2008

You Will Be a Lot Less Safe on Saturday: A debate has been raging here in Washington for over a year now over the parameters by which our intelligence officers and military personnel can monitor phone calls and e-mails of suspected terrorists. At question is whether a foreign to foreign phone call that is routed through a switching station in the US is subject to US privacy laws even though both the caller and receiver are in foreign countries. Also at issue is US officials must get a warrant before listening if one of the persons is a known terrorist and the threat is perceived to be imminent.

The Senate on Tuesday passed a bill by a vote of 68-29 which was an agreed upon compromise supported by the President, all Republicans in both houses and, obviously, a substantial bi-partisan majority of the members of the Senate. This bill would extend and modify the so-called Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). Only the most liberal Senators opposed it. Senators Obama and Clinton interestingly did not vote on this bill. If it had been put on the House floor, it would have passed easily with support from all Republicans and many moderate Democrats. But the ultra-liberals in the House, which includes Speaker Pelosi, do not want to allow any ability to listen to anyone anywhere without a warrant from a US judge. So, she refused to allow the Senate passed compromise to be voted on in the House and we adjourned today until February 25th. Therefore, the authorization that has been in place since soon after 9/11 expires at midnight Saturday.

This is awful. Starting Saturday, our military and intelligence officers will not lawfully be able to listen to as much internet and phone traffic as they have been able to since 9/11.....and all our enemies know it. This is the first real success that the new Democratic majority has had in weakening our safety against terrorists. But I fear it won't be the last.

Hopefully, public pressure in the next 10 days will cause the House leadership to change their position. Let's keep that pressure on.

Of Marines and Cheese Soufflé: Those of us who live in California have come to expect pretty strange stuff to come out of Berkeley. Do you remember when, after 9/11, the City Council there told their fire trucks to stop flying the American flag? Well, they are at it again. The Berkeley City Council recently passed a resolution by a vote of 8-1 opposing the US Marine Corps recruiting

station in town calling the Marines "unwelcome and uninvited intruders." Furthermore, they gave a free permanent parking spot in front of the recruiting office to the very radical anti-military group "Code Pink" so they could "impede passively or actively" the efforts of the Marines. Some city officials referred to the Marines as "trained killers" who are known for "death, destruction, and maiming." They further said that the Marines were responsible for "horrible karma." By the way, these are the sorts of people who are influencing the Democratic House leadership to oppose the above-mentioned Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Heavy Sigh.

OK, because of the United States Marines, this is a free country. And the Berkeley City Council is free to say what they want. But they do not have to have their activities subsidized by the rest of us around the country. That's why I and Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) in the Senate introduced The Semper Fi Act. This act would strip all \$2 million of earmarks slated to be spent within the City of Berkeley in 2008 and instead give that money to the Marine Corps for recruitment efforts.

And these aren't your everyday earmarks either. One of them is \$243,000 for a local restaurant Chez Panisse to create "gourmet organic school lunches" in the Berkeley School District. Chez Panisse is dedicated to "environmental harmony" and offers such menu items as "comte cheese soufflé with mache salad," "Meyer lemon éclairs with huckleberry coulis" and "chicory salad with creamy anchovy vinaigrette and olive toast". It just makes your mouth water right on your Birkenstocks doesn't it?

So what will happen with this bill? Democrats in leadership of both the House and the Senate seem to be trying to insure this bill never comes to the floor for a vote. The Marines in time of war or organic gourmet lunches? We'll see which one Speaker Pelosi prefers.

Sensationalism: The Roger Clemens Congressional hearing took place yesterday after four hours of nail biting testimony. Why is Congress spending time on baseball?

We have a deficit that is now heading back up over \$400 billion. We have unsustainable programs in Social Security and Medicare. We have no control over our immigration policies and radical terrorists around the world who want to kill us.

The *why* is clear. It's great spectacle and generates lots of publicity and attention for members of Congress. But Major League Baseball is a private enterprise, albeit one with a federally granted monopoly. The products alleged to have been used are legal with a prescription.

It seems to me that this is an issue for baseball to work out in its own rules to please its customers, the fans. It is not something that rises to the level of Congressional investigations.

But gee, if we didn't do this people might spend more time looking at earmarks and overspending. Now we wouldn't want that would we?

Until next week, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell